

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

arizonahighways.com DECEMBER 2003

three ways to visit the
GRAND CANYON

4

SPECIAL SECTION

The Grand Canyon

Arizona’s centerpiece natural wonder is the extraordinary chasm in the state’s northwest quadrant, where 4 million-plus visitors go each year for incomparable panoramas and outdoor experiences. This month, *Arizona Highways* examines the Canyon from the south, the complex internal floor and the north.

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South Rim

Most visitors head to this sprawling escarpment for the dramatic views from a number of ideal and accessible observation points.

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Deep in the tough gorges, the Redwall limestone formations pose daunting tests to anyone who seeks a path through them.

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North Rim

This out-of-the-way high plateau and spectacular alpine environment create a haven for people and wildlife.

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CITIES & TOWNS

Christmas, Snowflake-style

The aptly named town in eastern Arizona has its own special way of being home for the holidays.

[THIS PAGE] The last rays of the setting sun envelop a lone hiker on a hazy day at Yaki Point in Grand Canyon National Park.
GEORGE H.H. HUEY
[FRONT COVER] Clinging to the edge of the Grand Canyon at Mohave Point, a snow-covered juniper frames a timeless view of light and landscape. See story, page 4.
[BACK COVER] Crimson monkeyflowers line Royal Arch Creek as it tumbles through Elves Chasm in the Canyon.
BOTH BY LARRY ULRICH

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Two brothers exchange Christmas gifts, but neither has a clue who sent what to whom.

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At Holy Trinity, a Benedictine monastery in southeastern Arizona, visitors find silence, solitude and a sense of peace.

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The ringing and magic of silver bells at Christmastime linger on for those who want to hear.

54 HIKE OF THE MONTH Brittlebush Trail

Hikers on the boulder-strewn route in the Sonoran Desert National Monument south of Phoenix find a surprisingly remote landscape.



Great Humor Column

When I could finally see through the tears of laughter after reading about Gene Perret’s desire to be a bull rider (“Wit Stop,” July ’03), I decided I must tell you how much Mrs. Hellwig and I enjoy his column in every issue.

LOUIS HELLWIG, Shoreline, WA
Beginning next month, “Gene Perret’s Wit Stop” will move to our revitalized Web site at arizonahighways.com. Click on “Discover Arizona.” Gene’s humor column is so popular we think it will help build a following on the Internet.

Date Shake Founder

I know who originated “The World Famous Date Shake” (“Taking the Off-ramp,” July ’03). It was my father, Russell Nicoll. Perhaps you had stopped by the Valerie Jean Date Shop at some time, depending on your age. The shop is no longer open, and the last time I drove by I felt sad.
My dad opened the shop in 1929 and gave it my name. I don’t remember the year that he started with the date milkshake, but it was before World War II.

Gen. George Patton’s men loved to stop for date milkshakes when they were training on tank maneuvers nearby in the desert.
VALERIE JEAN SMART, Tucson

Grand Canyon Trip

I really enjoyed reading Gary Ladd’s backpacking adventure (“Dancing With Lightning on Mighty Vishnu Temple,” July ’03). In his story, six people made this trip. But actually a few others tagged along in a less-physical way back in our hometowns throughout the United States.

About a month before his departure, a group of us were on a 10-day Colorado River rafting trip with Gary. This trip was sponsored by the Friends of *Arizona Highways* and was geared for photo enthusiasts like myself. One morning, Gary asked our boatman to pull over to the shore where he unloaded two metal containers and buried them among the rocks. It was at this point we found out about his upcoming trip and the need to cache food supplies there.
It wasn’t until later, at our river-rafting reunion, that we caught up with Gary and saw photographs documenting his successful climb up Vishnu Temple.

DOUG BACSO, Cleveland, OH
The Friends’ photo workshops not only teach photo technique, but take participants into the rugged

outback. And, as this letter demonstrates, a special kind of camaraderie develops among the participants.

Old West Tales

I wanted to let you know that I really enjoyed the bonus section titled “True Tales of the Frontier West,” (July ’03). Not only are the stories great, but the reference to different Arizona locations is helpful. For example, I’ve traveled near the Canyon Diablo train robbers’ routes, and it was interesting to read about Buckey O’Neill’s relentless pursuits.
As usual, the many hiking and travel articles provided increased insight about where to go in Arizona. So, I do plan to visit the Hubbell Trading Post and Kendrick Mountain Trail on another visit.

THOMAS M. MURRAY, Seattle, WA
I just want to say, your July 2003 issue was one of your best. I really enjoyed the “True Tales of the Frontier West.”

JAN EDGERTON, Duncan
Congrats! Hooray! Outstanding! Thank you for the Old West stories. These stories are what keeps the magazine in my hands for hours on end. When I first get my issue, I look through it to see the beautiful photography. Then later, I look for the stories that interest me.

The Old West stories about Arizona are the best I’ve seen for a while.
DENNIS GARVER, Columbus, OH

I thoroughly enjoyed reading about Mickey Free and the other stories about the Old West. Readers of the magazine really appreciate stories like that.

CAROL H. KENNEDY, Allyn, WA

Disappointed

We attempted to relocate to Arizona earlier this year, but we mainly saw huge new freeways just built or being built with metering lights factored in to accommodate the enormous population and the huge growth that is going on.
Guard your saguaros and your open space.
I remember Arizona from four decades ago and how it used to look and be paradise. It seems as though the developers want to build to the mountains or the border, whichever stops them first.

We chose not to stay.
PAM GAGLIARDO, Fort Bragg, CA

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The SILVER BELLS
of Christmas
STILL RING
for Those
Who Want
to Hear



CARLTONS’ PHOTOGRAPHIC, INC.

I REMEMBER THE COLD CHRISTMAS EVES OF my childhood, when I would stay awake as long as I could, huddled under a mountain of blankets, waiting to hear the magical, sweet sound of silver sleigh bells and the thud of reindeer hooves crunching in the snow on the roof.

Now I have children of my own, but Christmas no longer seems like it did when I was a child, growing up in the crisp Colorado winters. The song “White Christmas” easily applies to holidays spent in the Sonoran Desert, dreaming of snows I used to know. So for a Christmas surprise, I bundled up my 7-year-old twin boys, Blake and Hayden, and we headed north for a little Christmas magic. As we neared the mountain town of Williams and a magical trip on the Polar Express, hosted by the Grand Canyon Railway, we listened to a taped version of *The Polar Express*, written and illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg and recorded by actor Liam Neeson. This award-winning storybook chronicles a boy’s trip on an enchanted train ride to the North Pole, where he receives the first gift of Christmas—a silver sleigh bell cut from one of the reindeer’s harnesses. We listened to the adventure as we drove northward and the desert landscape gave way to towering pine trees and snowy fields.

“Mom, you were telling the truth,” Blake exclaimed at the first glimpse of white powder. “Snow is real!”
When we finally arrived at the train depot, the boys engaged in a snowball fight. The steam from the locomotive billowed out in gusty sighs, enveloping the train in a misty apron of steam, a scene included in the book. We climbed aboard with other families dressed in winter flannels, bulky coats and warm caps. Bright-eyed and pink-cheeked, the boys settled into the soft green seats of the 1923 Pullman car and peered out the window where large snowflakes swirled softly in the dark sky.

With a rumble and a hiss, the train lurched forward and then clicked rapidly as it sped along the tracks. Merry elves dressed in white

smocks and billowy white hats ambled down the aisle serving chocolate-chip cookies the size of plates and “hot cocoa as thick and rich as melted chocolate bars,” as Van Allsburg writes. A lady in green read *The Polar Express*.

Thirty minutes out of the depot, the train arrived at the North Pole. Children wiped the mist from the windows and stared at the bright lights of the elfin city. Santa stood in his sleigh harnessed to the most famous reindeer in history and waved merrily as the train slowed to pick him up.

As the train turned around and headed back to the depot, Santa walked down the aisle of each car and handed out silver sleigh bells to the children. When Santa reached my boys, they threw their arms around the jolly fellow and pressed their faces against his red coat.

“I love you, Santa,” Blake said, his eyes shining from the magic of it all.
Santa patted their heads and with a big smile handed them each their very own silver bells. When Santa had left our car, the lady in green started singing Christmas carols, leading with “Jingle Bells.” She leaned toward Hayden and gave him the microphone, which he took with glee, leading all of the car’s passengers in song with the accompaniment of the ringing sleigh bells.

When we returned to the depot, Blake and Hayden grasped their bells in their gloved fists, taking care not to lose the bells the way the boy in the book had lost his.

“Lucky are the children who know there is a jolly fat man in a red suit who pilots a flying sleigh,” said Van Allsburg in his 1986 acceptance speech for the book’s Caldecott Medal, awarded each year to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children. “We should envy them. The inclination to believe in the fantastic may strike some as a failure in logic, or gullibility, but it’s really a gift.”

On the way home, the boys happily jingled the silver bells—bells that the book explains most adults can’t hear. What my boys couldn’t know was that I’m not like the adults in the book.

I believe in the magic of Christmas and cold winter nights and reindeer prancing in the snow. Those silver bells still ring for me. **AH**
EDITOR’S NOTE: *The Polar Express* comes to life on the Grand Canyon Railway throughout December. For information: (800) THETRAIN; www.thetrain.com.



Three Views of the GRAND CANYON

The crown jewel in Arizona is, of course, the Grand Canyon. Most visitors to the national park — 4 million or so each year — peer into the great chasm from the South Rim, the most common of three main viewpoints.

The second view is from the overlooks on the North Rim, which is 1,000 feet higher than the South Rim and bedecked with the great Kaibab National Forest. So isolated is the North Rim that a unique animal species has evolved there.

But going into the Canyon's depths and spending some time there yields, by far, the most impressive views. Here the visitor confronts the labyrinthine ruggedness and the sheer immensity of the Canyon, the mile-high cliffs, the changing colors as the sun moves across the sky, the searing heat or freezing cold of the season, the myriad waterfalls and streams that feed the Colorado River, and the profusion of wildlife from frogs and bats to bighorn sheep.

This month, as *Arizona Highways'* annual "Greeting Card to the World," we present these three views of the Canyon.

May your holidays be glorious.

— THE EDITORS



Lava Falls Rapids. GARY LADD



Vishnu schist, exposed in Granite Gorge. TOM TILL



Matkatamiba Canyon. LARRY ULRICH



Vaseys Paradise. LARRY ULRICH



Royal Arch Creek. LARRY ULRICH

Deer Creek Falls. GARY LADD



[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 4 AND 5] In a Grand Canyon vista seen from Lipan Point near the national park's east entrance station, sunrise enlivens the stratified reds of Escalante Butte and adds a silver shimmer to the Colorado River winding past soft folds in the hills south of the Unkar Creek delta. GEORGE STOCKING



Elves Chasm. LARRY ULRICH



Kaibab bridge. GARY LADD



Ancient Indian granaries at Nankoweap Canyon. TOM TILL

SOUTH RIM

Viewpoints from which to see the great open space by Scott Thybony





AN OLD WAGON TRACK PASSES the ruins of a Navajo hogan before fading away to nothing. I leave the last traces of it and cut through a scatter of junipers toward Comanche Point, the most dramatic promontory on the wild, eastern escarpment of the South Rim. The plateau I cross flares upward as it approaches the Rim, the way a wave builds to a crest, hiding from view what lies beyond. But I know it's there; I can sense the openness, the great empty space of the Grand Canyon.

No trails lead toward the point, which lies about 7 miles north of Desert View, and the only tracks I pass are those of elk. I drop into a sheltered valley and find signs of them everywhere — the cuts of hooves in ground damp from recent snows, the droppings, the trampled bedding grounds and a feral scent when the wind shifts. They winter at the Rim's east end, within sight of Desert View and its crowded overlooks.

My reason for being here is simple. Like most Grand Canyon visitors, I've come for the view. Comanche Point is a favorite of many Canyon enthusiasts, a place I've heard about for years but never checked out. The Canyon is just too big to see it all, measuring 277 miles by river and much longer by the rims. Between Lee's Ferry and Lake Mead, the serrated edge of the South Rim runs for a staggering 1,373 miles. But most of the more than 4 million who annually visit the national park keep to a narrow front of a few dozen miles along the Rim drive. The rest of the Rim country lies untrammelled, reachable only by rough roads and largely forgotten.

Under the weight of a backpack, I pick a route up Comanche's tilted flank with a growing sense of expectation. No matter how many times I encounter the Canyon, whether storm clouds are tumbling over the cliffs or under a pure-blue sky, whether I reach it by train or at the end of some miles-from-nowhere dirt road, it comes as a surprise. It's a child's sense of surprise, one that grows with repetition.

Glimpses of the gorge begin to appear, but the steep incline screens the main event until I reach the farthest tip of the point. Suddenly the visual field rips wide open

(Text continued on page 14)



[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 8 AND 9] After a spring snowstorm, transitory icicles frame a view across the Grand Canyon to the distant North Rim, almost 1,000 feet higher than the South Rim. RANDY PRENTICE [LEFT] Storm clouds threaten the Palisades of the Desert as evening light dramatizes the cliffs of Comanche Point, about 7 miles north of Grand Canyon National Park's east entrance. JACK DYKINGA [BELOW] Silhouetted against the western sky, a hiker gazing down at the Colorado River from Comanche Point appears to dwarf Vishnu Temple and Wotans Throne on the horizon. ELIAS BUTLER





[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 12 AND 13] A juniper at Mohave Point waves its snow-flocked branches over an expansive view of the Canyon.

LARRY ULRICH [LEFT] The Grand Canyon Railway runs daily from Williams to the Grand Canyon. El Tovar Hotel, in the background, opened in 1905 as Santa Fe Railways' "destination resort" at the South Rim.

RICHARD L. DANLEY [BELOW] West Rim Drive terminates at Hermits Rest, designed by Mary Jane Colter.

LARRY LINDAHL [OPPOSITE PAGE] Also designed by Colter, the Desert View Watchtower overlooks the Canyon's eastern end and the Palisades of the Desert.

RICHARD L. DANLEY

got off where the old mission bell hangs from a stone arch.

Unless you know where to look, Hermits Rest can be hard to spot, having been built into the canyonside instead of planted on top. This hideaway has long been a favorite of mine, especially in winter with a fire crackling in the vaulted stone fireplace. Mary Jane Colter, an architect for the Fred Harvey Co., designed it and many of the finest buildings on the South Rim. A local story says she would slip away to a secluded viewpoint nearby to escape from the crowds and the press of work.

On a tip from a Canyon resident, I climbed a low wall and angled down the tree-covered slope. The ruins of a trail soon appeared, overgrown with piñon pines, but I could still recognize Colter's hand in the stonework. A flight of massive steps curved down to an abandoned look-out with a stone bench. In the Canyon below, red walls framed a distant view of Hermit Rapids. Sitting there, I could imagine her with sketchbook in hand, taking in the quiet, balanced beauty of the place as morning light angled down the cliffs.

I once considered the whole idea of viewpoints to be a 19th-century throwback, a way to distance yourself from nature and turn the wilderness experience into a spectator sport. But to see the world clearly, you need to pay attention, and sometimes the right perch helps. I retraced my steps and took the shuttle back to Hopi Point, the most-recommended spot for watching sunsets. The bold promontory extends far into the heart of the Canyon, giving you a box seat overlooking 90 miles of this cliff-carved landscape. A clutch of visitors soon drew my attention to park employee Marlon Smith. A raptor biotechnician, he was scanning the depths with a pair of high-powered binoculars, keeping track of a nesting California condor.

Even with the condor's immense 9.5-foot wingspan, a single bird can be hard to spot in such a vast expanse. Smith was observing a female perched high on the Red-wall cliff below us. He handed me the binoculars as he gave a thumbnail history of the giant birds. On the brink

(Text continued on page 18)

Seventy feet tall, the stone tower stands as a prominent landmark in contrast to the hidden setting of Hermits Rest.



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as cliffs fall away on all sides. The ground no longer props up the sky, letting it spill into the vast gulf and fill it with light. A sudden shift in perception kicks in as the local horizons break down. Instead of standing at the center of the landscape looking out, I find myself on the edge of a sunken world looking in. The Rim curves away on each side, stretching for miles in an unbroken wall known as the Palisades of the Desert.

Far below runs the Colorado River in the most expansive view of the river I've seen — 10 flowing miles centered on Tanner Rapids. In the lull between gusts of wind, I can hear the white-water roar rising 4,400 feet, and in the clear air I can make out a river party of two yellow rafts and four blue kayaks. One by one, they enter the rapid's tongue and slide into rows of waves converging in a chevron pattern. At this distance, everything unfolds in dreamy slow motion instead of fast and furious, the way it does when you're pulling hard on the oars.

As night approaches, I return to camp and come upon a pair of elk skeletons. Two bulls with massive racks of antlers died here high on the Rim, perhaps having fought each other to the finish. I can't be certain, since scavengers have rearranged the bones. During mating season, bulls spar with each other in ritual combat, but only rarely do the confrontations end in death.

Before sunrise I am back on the summit of Comanche Point. The dawn sky forms a solid wall to the east, smudged red where the sun will rise. The light builds and the reds turn molten. Suddenly the sun breaches the horizon with laser intensity, striking across the Painted Desert. Low-slung clouds ignite as the piercing cry of a peregrine falcon splits the still air. Across the gorge to the west, Vishnu Temple, Wotans Throne and the east wall of Cape Royal catch the first light.

A day earlier I had driven to the South Rim to make arrangements with the National Park Service for an exploratory trip later in the year. The rest of the day I spent threading together the classic viewpoints along the most famous 34-mile section of the Grand Canyon. To begin on the west end, I caught the shuttle bus to Hermits Rest and





The Grand Canyon has no single, commanding vantage point. Where you end up doesn't matter as much as the vagaries of weather, the time of day, your choice of companions and the appreciation you bring to it.

(Continued from page 14)

of extinction 20 years ago, he said, they were successfully reintroduced north of the Grand Canyon in 1996. A female recently had laid an egg in a shallow cave visible from Hopi Point. Smith kept his fingers crossed, but unfortunately, it did not hatch.

Walking 2 miles back to Grand Canyon Village by the South Rim Trail, I stopped for a late lunch at El Tovar Hotel only 50 feet from the cliff edge. Mary Colter decorated the interiors, but the grand architecture is the work of Charles Whittlesey, who incorporated an interesting concept into the hotel's design. He oriented the rooms so they lacked good views, hoping to encourage guests to get off their duffs and walk outside for the full effect.

I continued another 2 miles to Mather Point, where so many visitors first gaze into the Canyon. As a woman and her friends approached the edge, I overheard her surprised reaction. "Oooh-my-goodness," she said, "it keeps going down! Wow!" And the next person who walked up

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 16 AND 17] East of Yaki Point, late-afternoon sunlight creates sharp outlines and shadows on Wotans Throne and Vishnu Temple against a storm-cloud laden sky. DAVID ELMS JR. [ABOVE] Three snow-custed slabs at Mather Point direct our gaze toward Zoroaster and Brahma temples. GARY LADD

expressed it even more succinctly: "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!"

As they were taking in the views, Park Ranger Greg Moore prepared to rope down to a series of ledges. Some visitors stand here and find themselves gripped by a strange compulsion to toss money over the edge. In a short time, the buildup of coins becomes a safety hazard by luring the unwary beyond the railing. In one documented incident, a man slipped and fell to his death attempting to gather some spare change. The day before, Moore told me, three small children tried to squeeze through the railing to get the shiny coins. Luckily a maintenance worker stopped them while their parents looked on, oblivious to the danger. Moore eventually retrieved 15 pounds of coins, mostly pennies, which represented only a few months' accumulation.

With the shadows beginning to lengthen, I drove 26 miles east from the village to reach Desert View. Two structures designed by Colter bracket the main South Rim, Hermits Rest on the west and Desert View Watchtower on the east. Seventy feet tall, the stone tower stands as a prominent landmark in contrast to the hidden setting of Hermits Rest. I climbed the stairs, passing the murals by Hopi artist Fred Kabotie. From the top I could see Comanche Point, where I would camp the next night.

I found Comanche Point to be a spectacular viewpoint,



but was it the best? For some time, I've asked veteran river guides, hard-core hikers and backcountry rangers about their favorite overlooks. Some of their choices were old standbys of mine, such as distant Havasupai Point, 29 miles west of Grand Canyon Village, reached by a long, teeth-rattling drive on a dirt road, and Yaki Point, off the Rim drive 3 miles east of the village. For first-timers, one friend suggested Yavapai Point and its glass-enclosed observation deck, halfway between Yaki Point and the village. Many of their choices involved difficult, multiday treks to reach, and rarely did two people agree on the same "best" place.

Such a range of responses was unexpected, until I realized one simple fact: The Grand Canyon has no single, commanding vantage point. Where you end up doesn't matter as much as the vagaries of weather, the time of day, your choice of companions and the appreciation you bring to it.

Jack Fuss worked as a game warden in the 1920s. He

[ABOVE] Out of gray mist above O'Neill Butte — named in 1964 to honor Arizona's most famous Rough Rider, William O. "Buckey" O'Neill — a rainbow arcs into the Canyon depths. RANDY PRENTICE

told an interviewer in 1975 about his first arrival on the South Rim. With an Indian companion, he had ridden on horseback north from Flagstaff, intending to go trapping in Utah. They had traveled for a couple of days when they found themselves on the brink of the Grand Canyon. "We came right out of the cedars," he recalled, "and there it was, *kaplunk*. I liked to have a heart attack when I thought, 'Am I gonna cross that thing?' . . . It scairt me so, I said my prayers right there on the Rim. It was so beautiful it took my breath away. I was speechless. . . . I thought, 'Holy smokes, what a show!' It was magnificent."

For sheer impact, you can't beat the element of surprise. **AH**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Grand Canyon National Park, (928) 638-7888; www.nps.gov/grca/grandcanyon.

A former Grand Canyon guide and National Park Service river ranger, Scott Thybony of Flagstaff once spent more time in a sleeping bag below the Rim than in his own bed. Now he writes about Canyon country and those living close to it.

Route-finding through the Redwall cliffs by Craig Childs

BELOW THE RIM



I WALK DOWN THE SWALLOWING HOLE of a limestone-walled side canyon.

The rock walkway hangs like a highwire, a thin passage sawed into rock where boulders have gathered and jammed between the pearl-smooth walls. The sides drop steeply, tumbling into plunge pools; I shrug off my pack and climb down, scouting to see if there might be a way through.

My answer comes within several feet. I turn a bend and find myself perched over a 700-foot drop. I step to the very edge, arms braced between canyon walls, neck craned so that I can peer down the expanse. The limestone layer in the Canyon strata called Redwall has again stymied me.

The Redwall, the prominent red cliff visible midway down the canyon wall, is like a Great Wall of China, thousands of miles of palisade, wrapping in and out of the Grand Canyon. Its sheer faces allow few ways up or down to other rock layers that are traversed more easily. Getting past or through the Redwall means, in some places, reaching the river. In other places, it merely means that an obstacle has been crossed in getting from here to there.

Guidebooks, lectures or magazine articles do not explain ways of getting through the Redwall, a natural barrier of cliffs between the upper and lower regions of the Canyon. Any descending or ascending routes through it are in areas where the rock has broken apart, leaving faults and fractures that can be felt with a hand, seen with eyes.

CURIOUS ABOUT HOW others might have found hiking routes through the Grand Canyon, in 1997 I went to speak with a man who had found his way through the Redwall to the river, discovering 116 different passages. He was only able to find this many routes after about 12,000 miles of walking in the Grand Canyon in a combined total of 1,024 days over 42 years.

His name was Harvey Butchart, the author of *Grand Canyon Treks: 12,000 Miles Through the Grand Canyon*, published in 2002 by Spotted Dog Press. The book combines his three previously published Canyon route guides into one volume. I went to his home near Phoenix. When he answered the door, he shook my hand, the skin of his fingers loose and warm with age, and offered the way in. He was in his early 90s.

I was surprised by his small stature. He moved with elderly stiffness, his head shaking subtly. We passed a chessboard, darkened from use. I asked about the game. He paused and looked up, his body moving slowly, mechanically.

“I play twice a day,” Butchart said in a shaky voice.

“Do you find any parallel between playing chess and looking for routes in canyons?” I asked casually.

“No,” he said.

“Really?”

With a bit of thought about my query, he shook his head no. I did not believe him. He began asking questions. I responded about various desert treks I had taken. He was inquisitive. How had I set my supply caches? What was the condition of drinking water — springs, streams or waterholes? Did I go solo or with others? Did I take ropes and harnesses? Did my companions have similar skill? What kind of rock were we in? What part of the desert?

His inquisitiveness demanded the details of how I had moved through the terrain, how I had lived. He asked me for stories. This trait, I realized, explained how he

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 20 AND 21]

The formidable Redwall limestone cliffs form a natural barrier between the Grand Canyon’s upper and lower regions. To reach the Colorado River from the rims, backcountry hikers must find fissures or faults that create routes through the Redwall, sometimes called the guardian of the Canyon.

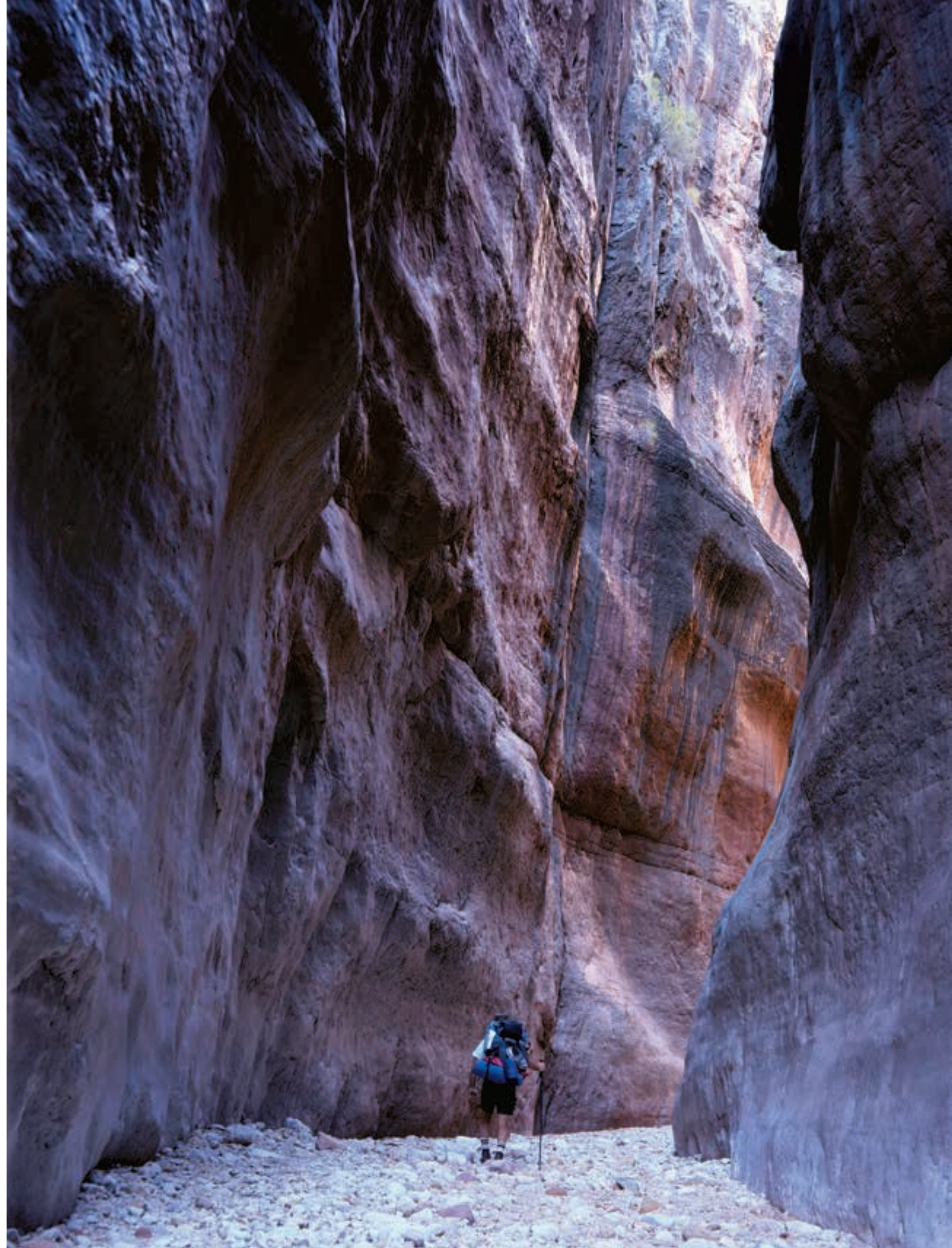
ELIAS BUTLER [LEFT] As the river cuts deeply into the Canyon’s strata, the Redwall limestone — visible in the distant cliffs — stands out as the most prominent layer. Geologist Karl Karlstrom rappels down a cliff above Sixtymile Canyon.

GARY LADD [OPPOSITE PAGE] The narrows in Jumpup Canyon provide a route through the Redwall, but are also channels for dangerous flash floods. RICHARD L. DANLEY

. . . skirting along ledges, dipping into the water and swimming wherever possible, climbing with the rope only where I must.

But finally, I run out of rope. I am left dangling.

The Redwall closes on me, and I retreat.





‘The Grand Canyon is a very rough place. Most people coming to the Rim and looking down don’t really see the patterns between canyons and rock formations.’

had walked 12,000 miles through the Grand Canyon. For most people, walking that far would become a monotonous chore, or they’d be killed by falling rocks or flood or thirst. Butchart made it through so many miles because he was curious.

I finally urged a few stories out of him. He told me that in the 1950s he had ridden an air mattress, carrying a frameless canvas pack, into the Grand Canyon. He began on the San Juan River in Mexican Hat, Utah, and floated to the Colorado River at Glen Canyon, down Marble Canyon, and 108 miles into the Grand Canyon where the Redwall cliffs towered over him. It was done alone, a practice now prohibited by the National Park Service, without permission from rangers.

“The safety measure,” he said, “was that in waves the air mattress would be under my chest, sticking out both sides

like water wings. I could go through quite a few rapids without even wetting my hair. When I did tip over, I pulled the mattress under me, waiting until I got to a good, quiet place to turn everything right-side-up.”

This was not a river trip in any typical sense. Commercial trips are circuses of amenities: rafts weighted down by extravagant comforts, reams of National Park Service paperwork brought along and emergency radios ready to call in search-and-rescue teams at a moment’s notice. Butchart’s was a way of travel, route-finding down a river so that he could get deep into the Grand Canyon. It was, he said, the easiest way he ever found of slipping through the Canyon, unhindered by the Redwall limestone.

I COME TO THE GRAND CANYON and, like Butchart, hunt for off-trail routes down the Redwall. This time, I explore the possibilities of a long canyon out at the west end, near Toroweap Point. I use ropes, stringing them into a narrow slot. Deep in a Redwall crevice, I find myself pinched into the thinnest of slivers. Water runs down the slot, and I swim from pool to pool, rope over my shoulder. I tie off to boulders, climbing down

through waterfalls, lowering my pack ahead of me.

Earth and water make up the Grand Canyon. Powerful flash floods eat into the fault and fractured bedrock every summer, leaving sculpted sand washes and sinuous passageways thousands of feet deep. There is a science to the motion of water, to gradients and meanders and vortexes, turning this place into a vast equation of fluid mechanics.

Examining the Grand Canyon for the first time, it might look like a drunken landscape, slots and ledges and buttes that seem unrelated, tossed in as if spilled upon the ground. A second look would reveal similarities and differences between rock formations. A third study would show that the size of sand grains offers details about the length of side canyons, about the kinds of floods that come through, about the hardness and weakness of bedrock nearby. After years of walking and seeing the Canyon, each crevice would carry meaning. Every flood scour driven into the rock would be rich with implication.

I try reading these implications, skirting along ledges, dipping into the water and swimming wherever possible, climbing with the rope only where I must. But finally, I run

out of rope. I am left dangling. The Redwall closes on me, and I retreat.

I KNEW THAT HARVEY BUTCHART had been a mathematician. This piqued my curiosity because I once went walking with another well-traveled Grand Canyon route-finder named George Steck. Now in his 70s, Steck holds a doctorate in statistics from University of California, Berkeley, and worked for most of his life with theoretical math and probability formulae. I figured there must be a connection between math and route-finding.

When I was at Butchart’s house, I asked him about his doctoral thesis.

“It was on spiral helices in Euclidean space,” he said, “extending the idea from three dimensions to any number of dimensions. You’re acting like you have a professional interest in mathematics.”

“Well, I’ve been fascinated with it,” I said. “A lot of my master’s work was in flash-flood hydrology. I did field work in the Grand Canyon.”

To this he said, “Hmm,” with a professor’s tone. I continued. “I was studying scours in canyon walls

**[ABOVE]
Adventurous
travelers on river-
rafting excursions
often hike the
steep incline at
the mouth of
Nankoweap
Canyon (right
foreground) to
reach ancient
granaries in its
walls. Hikers have
a striking view of
the imposing
Redwall on the
opposite side.
KERRICK JAMES**



Why did he go looking for routes
in a place where most people see only bedlam?
What was it that he could see that allowed
him to walk 12,000 miles?

and the mathematical relationship between different scour marks and types of flash floods. I'm interested in finding patterns."

"Hmm," he said again, keeping an academic distance. I said, "The reason I was asking about math is that I was talking to George Steck not long ago, and I find it interesting that two prominent Grand Canyon route-finders have been so involved with math. This left me thinking that math, like chess, might have a lot to do with route-finding. Finding some clean path through complex topography. Have you ever thought about that?"

His answer came quickly. "I never thought my connection with math had anything at all to do with my interest in the Grand Canyon, no. I could have been doing geology, for instance; that's more associated with Grand Canyon."

I was suddenly embarrassed. I continued anyway. "But you're solving complicated problems."

"Not the same thing."

"That mathematicians are route-finders, just of a different sort?"

"No. I don't see a connection," he said.

I did not know how to ask the question. I wanted to tell him that I believed he had found the order within the chaos. I wanted to point a finger right at Butchart's face and demand an answer. Why did he go looking for routes in a place where most people see only bedlam? What was it that he could see that allowed him to walk 12,000 miles? But he would look at me deadpan, maybe even roll his eyes. I would be dismissed as a romantic student. So I kept a straight face and looked at the floor for a second to swallow.

Looking up I asked, "Do you think that with all of these backdoor routes you've found that there is order to the Grand Canyon?"

"Order?" Butchart asked.

I tried to keep up the pace, saying, "The Grand Canyon is a very rough place. Most people coming to the Rim and looking down don't really see the patterns between canyons and rock formations. There are designs in the landscape, and you have personally discovered how to read them."

"Hmm," he said.

He didn't seem annoyed by my comments, but I was not getting anywhere with them. He interrupted me and began asking more questions.

He wanted to know where I was going next, how I planned on finding water, how tall the cliffs were.

I told him about a Canyon route that I was soon going to try and

(Text continued on page 31)

[LEFT] Colorado River rapids, like these seen from above North Canyon, form as rock and debris flow in from the river's tributaries. JACK DYKINGA [FOLLOWING PANEL, PAGES 28 AND 29] Morning sunlight amplified against rock walls announces a perfect day in the Grand Canyon. RALPH LEE HOPKINS





(Continued from page 27)

explained some of the details.

He nodded. “I know the route. I’ve never done it or seen it, but I’ve heard about it.”

I wondered, *How has he heard of this route?* But I realized he was so familiar with the Grand Canyon that I could mention nameless canyons he had never seen and he would know their location exactly. Word gets around in these small groups of route-finders.

“You know, if there’s one route I regret not having done in all my trips, it’s that one.”

His eyes didn’t seem to hold regret, but he remained quiet. He clicked on his dentures. Maybe that was his sign of contrition. I sat with him for a moment, saying nothing. I realized that I would need to return from this route and tell him what I saw. That way, he could walk with me.

COMING TO THE next route, on another trip, I carry with me a geological map of the Grand Canyon, splotted with colors, each marking a different rock formation. Between these colors run shatter marks, indicating where the rock has faulted to form a slope that can be climbed upon. With a few other people, I climb down the Redwall face, moving in and out of caves and fractures. We come upon a rickety wooden stairway built 700 years ago by the ancestors of the Hopi Indians. We pass respectfully around it, using a rope instead, and finally touch ground. We have descended the Redwall.

This is the route Butchart had wanted to do, so I take careful notes. I would tell him this story and fill in some of the pieces he missed in the Canyon. But it was not to be. In June 2002, he died at the age of 95.

I now understand why Harvey Butchart denied that route-finding approximates chess or math. Route-finding is, instead, like a story. We listen to every detail of the land as we move through it. The way boulders erode. The snakelike curves of canyons. The color of stone. These details tell us how to move, where to place our feet. Unlike the rigid precision of mathematics, route-finding is pliable, give and take, a way of living, and the only way to slip through the Redwall.

I had looked forward to telling Butchart of this passage, filling in a gap that he had not been able to close. But perhaps it is best to leave the Grand Canyon unfinished. The Canyon houses a vault of mysteries shut in by cliff after cliff. It answered Butchart’s curiosity by posing

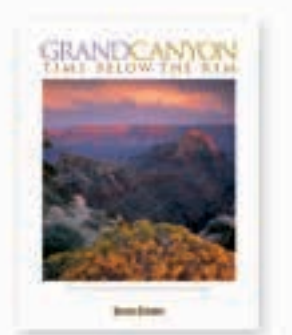


[OPPOSITE PAGE] Hikers pause at the Redwall’s rim, perhaps to contemplate a route through it to the river. **[ABOVE]** Across the river at Hundred and Fifty Mile Canyon, the Redwall contrasts with desert varnish, a thin, dark coating of manganese, iron and clay oxidized by bacteria living on rock surfaces. **BOTH BY GARY LADD**

endless questions. When I told him I was taking this route, he looked at me the way I look at the land, wondering: What is it like? Where will it take me? What will I learn? He knew that the Redwall remains the master, and we are only its inquisitive students. **AH**

Craig Childs, who lives in western Colorado, has written eight books about the Southwestern landscape, including The Desert Cries: A Season of Flash Floods in a Dry Land, published by Arizona Highways Books.

ADDITIONAL READING: Escape the beaten path and follow Craig Childs deeper into the Canyon with his book, *Grand Canyon: Time Below the Rim* (\$48.95), illustrated with full-color photography by Gary Ladd. To order, call toll-free (800) 543-5432 or go online to arizonahighways.com.



NORTH RIM

Spectacular, little-visited landscape by Gregory McNamee





[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 32 AND 33] Seasonal moisture fosters sunrise hues of rose and gold as monsoon clouds drift over the North Rim of the Grand Canyon at Point Imperial; Mount Hayden rises in the foreground. [LEFT] A juniper tree clings to the edge of Toroweap Point 3,000 feet above the Colorado River. In the distance, storm-fed waterfalls tinged the color of the Canyon walls cascade to the river below. [BELOW] The ruddy bark of a stately ponderosa pine provides a counterpoint to a vibrant stand of golden aspens on the North Rim.
ALL BY GARY LADD

The North Rim Parkway crosses the 9,000-foot-tall limestone-capped Kaibab Plateau, one of the highest points of the Colorado Plateau.



PASSING AMONG SUN-DAPPLED STANDS OF ASPEN, fir and spruce trees, broad meadows dotted with elk and deer, and plentiful small lakes and springs, the ribbon of road that connects the hamlet of Jacob Lake to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon has been called one of America's prettiest highways.

Though State Route 67 runs only about 45 miles between the two points, it more than deserves the accolade. Certainly it rates as one of the most attractive byways in Arizona, even if someone new to this little-seen corner of the state might think the spectacular alpine scenery a little out of place, more fitting to northern Canada, perhaps even Scandinavia.

Until, that is, the illusion is broken by a glimpse, at the few points along the road where the forest thins, of high, windswept desert far to the west, or by the sight of a rattlesnake sunning itself on a stony shoulder.

State 67, also called the North Rim Parkway, crosses the 9,000-foot-tall limestone-capped Kaibab Plateau, one of the highest points of the Colorado Plateau. From the vantage point of a traveler cruising along its smooth grade, the climb to the Kaibab from the rolling tablelands to the north, west and east seems easy, gradual, hardly a strain on any well-tended engine. But walk or bicycle up that same road, or have a good look at the plateau from the outskirts of the little town of Fredonia, and the traveler will see an island of whitish rock that rises above the sandy desert of the Arizona Strip like an iceberg from a vermilion sea. It is that view, very likely, that inspired some Paiute Indian long ago to call the great rise Kaibab — which means, accurately and fittingly, “mountain lying down.”

The intrepid pioneers who came to this place in the mid-19th century called the plateau Buckskin Mountain after the abundant herds of deer that, then as now, roamed the highlands above the Colorado River. And highlands they are: Where the Kaibab Plateau finally falls away before the vast abyss of the Grand Canyon, it stands a full quarter mile taller than the South Rim — some 10 miles distant as the crow flies — and nearly a mile and a quarter higher than the Colorado River, that strand of shimmering water that can be seen from many points along the North Rim, but that just as often hides itself away behind the great rock reefs that bear such sonorous names as King Arthur Castle and Sagittarius Ridge.

Those are only some of the plateau's numerous superlatives. Driving this road over the decades, I have pondered many other distinctions that make this place so different. For instance, there's the geographical isolation that has enabled the Kaibab squirrel to develop here and nowhere else in the world, and that has made the plateau so inviting to wildlife of all kinds; the difficult terrain, criss-crossed by tall escarpments and deep-cut valleys, that harbors all kinds of surprises, from hidden lakes to winding caves; the geological treasures that the Kaibab Plateau

(Text continued on page 38)





(Continued from page 35)

shelters, in addition, of course, to the Grand Canyon itself.

One of those treasures is the plateau's store of agates, born of volcanic fire. The pioneer Arizona writer and historian Sharlot Hall, who toured the North Rim by buckboard wagon in 1911, reveled in finding so many of them here, and recorded in her diary of the journey that the agates scattered on the ground "glistened in the rain and I picked up all I could carry and then sorted them out and reluctantly threw away all but the finest. Many of them would cut beautifully and the color and grain are very fine. No doubt they would have some commercial value if gathered carefully."

After spending a few days at a ranch at what is now DeMotte Park, the verdant valley crowned by the rustic Kaibab Lodge, Hall prophesied, incorrectly, that in the future there would be "hundreds of little homes all through these narrow, park-valleys down which our road winds." Yet, as she correctly noted, the seasons on the high plateau would make year-round settlement difficult, if not impossible. In her memoir, *Sharlot Hall on the Arizona Strip*, she wrote, "The snow is too heavy [for visitors] to stay up [on the Rim] all winter but it is only two days' drive down to Fredonia with its good school and pleasant village settlement for winter."

That two-day drive has been compressed, thanks to the automobile, into a journey of only an hour or two, but the Kaibab Plateau keeps a fine air of remoteness and distance about it all the same. Annually more than 4 million visitors come to Grand Canyon National Park — but most of them visit the easily accessible South Rim, with its quick road connections to interstate highways and sizable towns. Travel to the North Rim, five or six hours' drive away from its southerly counterpart, requires a little more effort, and

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 36 AND 37] A haze rises above the Colorado River at Toroweap Point as sunrise illuminates beargrass in flower at the Canyon's edge. JACK DYKINGA [ABOVE] Passing summer rains replenish the shallow waters of Greenland Lake on the North Rim. GEORGE H.H. HUEY [OPPOSITE PAGE] Piñon pine and Utah juniper trees cling precariously to the limestone cliffs of the North Kaibab Trail. JACK DYKINGA

certainly an appreciation for wide, high-lonesome country with few of the customary conveniences.

Even so, the North Rim sees plenty of visitors in season, before the first early snows descend and a blanket of near-absolute stillness falls on the great alpine forest. But then comes winter, when piercing cold settles in the high country and the Grand Canyon takes on an entirely different aspect from that of the usual postcards. The crowds of sightseers disappear with the changing of the leaves, and by the first snowfall the place is almost deserted. The snow keeps coming and coming, until it seals off the Canyon from the rest of the world — a solitude ably captured by Marguerite Henry in her beloved children's book *Brighty of the Grand Canyon*, celebrating the adventures of a little burro that roamed the Canyon back in the days when the North Rim was the province of only prospectors, hunters, a few pioneer farmers and the occasional outlaw.

Few people have come to replace those types here, at least in winter. And for good reason: The national park is closed to overnight visitors after mid-October, and frequent snowstorms often force the closing of

the North Rim Parkway for weeks at a time. But come spring, the snowpack begins to melt away, and the North Rim beckons another breed of adventurer — the hiker, drawn by an extensive network of rimp top trails that branches out in all directions from the park headquarters and the magnificent Grand Canyon Lodge.

One of the longer routes, the 5-mile Widforss Trail skirts a gorge west of the lodge and offers cool forest and brilliant inner-gorge scenery, as does the .6-mile paved trail to Cape Royal and Angels Window. Hikers can follow the trail to Bright Angel Point, a great place to watch the sunset, or the Transept Trail, which passes a thousand-year-old Puebloan dwelling.

It's possible, too, to tour the North Rim by car, although some of the roads are difficult for any but high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles to negotiate, winding thrillingly close to the very edge of the Grand Canyon. The 17-mile road leading westward from the lodge to Point Sublime makes for slow but pleasant going. That narrow finger of land, extending nearly 10 miles into the Canyon, hangs a mile above the maze of 2 billion-year-old rocks that line the Colorado River at Granite Gorge and takes in panoramic views of both the North and South rims, as well as the great, little-explored reef called Powell Plateau.

Anyone who has seen Point Sublime, aptly named by the geologist and artist Clarence Dutton, will appreciate why the noted desert rat Joseph Wood Krutch said of it, "No other vista I have ever seen at the Canyon or elsewhere gives so much meaning to the well-worn phrase, 'magnificent distances.' One may see for miles." Actually, it's something like 150 miles from east to west — one of the grandest views the North Rim affords.

A similar reward, easily reachable by car, awaits at Point

(Text continued on page 43)







**[PRECEDING PANEL,
PAGES 40 AND 41]
Sunset's warm
glow highlights
the golden
flowers of wild
buckwheat on a
limestone cliff
above Cape Royal.
JACK DYKINGA
[LEFT] Sunrise at
Point Imperial
reveals a view to
the north that
includes Saddle
Mountain, the
deep gorge of the
Colorado River's
course through
Marble Canyon,
and the distant
Vermilion Cliffs.
CHARLES LAWSEN**

(Continued from page 38)

Imperial, about 5 road miles northeast of the lodge. The highest elevation on the North Rim at 8,803 feet, Point Imperial affords a sweeping view of the eastern Grand Canyon, the great staircase of stone called the Vermilion Cliffs, the northern reaches of the Painted Desert and the confluence of the Little Colorado and Colorado rivers.

No visitor should miss the North Rim destination that is easiest of all: the Grand Canyon Lodge above Bright Angel Point. Celebrating its 75th birthday this year, the rustic construction of the lodge's limestone walls and timbered ceilings still complement the landscape. High and broad windows open onto fine views of the South Rim across

the Canyon and several towers, temples, ridges and tributary canyons.

Just below the lodge gapes one of the last yawns, Bright Angel Canyon, named by Canyon explorer John Wesley Powell in 1869 to honor a hymn his minister father was fond of singing:

*Shall we gather at the river
Where bright angels' feet have trod.*

The deep-cut, churned-up landscape demonstrates a major fact of Grand Canyon geology: namely, that the work of erosion has for eons been more forceful on the North Rim than across the river, because for eons the water here has flowed from north to south and not the other way around, with the Kaibab Plateau's historically plentiful annual snowfall assuring that water has been there to do the job.

Bright Angel Point makes just the spot to pause and reflect on the work of millions of years' worth of rainfall, wind and the movement of the earth in carving out the magnificent landscapes. You will have come a long way to see the splendor of the North Rim, passing through a part of the state that very few Arizonans, and few visitors from elsewhere, know well. You will be one of the fortunate ones — and what you will have seen in this lofty place will never leave you. **■**

Gregory McNamee, who wrote Grand Canyon Place Names, has made more than 25 trips from both rims of Grand Canyon down to the Colorado River. He lives in Tucson.

ADDITIONAL READING: For more full-color views of the Grand Canyon's spectacular panoramas and hidden alcoves, presented with informative descriptions and background, read *The Grand Canyon* (\$9.95) from Arizona Highways Books. To order, call toll-free (800) 543-5432 or go online to arizonahighways.com.





Christmas in Snowflake

W H E R E
T H E
S P I R I T
L I V E S
Y E A R -
R O U N D

Text by Janet Webb Farnsworth
Photographs by Richard Webb

P hotographer Richard Webb and I agree the Christmas song that begins *Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays* . . . describes our sentiments exactly. Snowflake is hometown for both of us, and we're here to celebrate Christmas Snowflake-style.

This small community in northeastern Arizona, which bills itself as "The Place Where the Christmas Spirit Lives Year-round," marks the Twelve Days of Christmas, December 1 through 12, with everything from religious services to fireworks. Most of the season's activities are free or



have minimal cost, so anyone can join in Snowflake's celebration.

Snowflakes in one form or another abound here at Christmas. Main Street is lined with old-fashioned streetlights, each one decorated with two 24-inch lighted snowflakes. A brilliant string of shining snowflakes crisscrosses Main Street, and Christmas trees in homes all through the town display hand-crocheted snowflake ornaments.

The most popular question I hear regarding my hometown is, "Does it really snow in Snowflake?" At an elevation of about 5,600 feet, the answer is a resounding "yes," but the town was named in honor of pioneers William J. Flake and Erastus Snow instead of the white stuff.

I start my Snowflake holiday experience on the first night of the 12 at the Heritage Christmas Parade and the town tree-lighting, where a good portion of the town's 4,500 residents watch Snowflake's Christmas lights illuminate downtown for the first time each season, then visit with Santa, enjoy a Christmas program and consume hot chocolate and cookies.

Santa Claus arrives in a fire truck covered with 5,000 lights and, you guessed it, a big snowflake on the front grill. It's barely above freezing, and gray clouds promise a blanket of snow by morning. Perfect weather for Christmas fun.

Gary Kirkman usually takes summer visitors for wagon rides and cookouts, but tonight people ride in his wagon to view Christmas light displays. Margie Reidhead's horse-drawn coach also helps haul sightseers.

The snow falls during the night, and I wake up to a white wonderland. Several

inches of snow blanket the town, giving tree limbs a festive look. Tonight is my favorite Christmas activity—the Historic Home Tour. The town, originally laid out with square blocks and wide tree-lined streets, has many old buildings constructed from locally made red-brick. Five restored pioneer homes are open to the public. All five homes are in the historic district, so many visitors walk through the snow to visit the cheerily decorated old houses.

The tour starts at the James Stinson home, the oldest building in town. Flake bought this house and 400 acres of farmland from Stinson in 1878. Stinson already had several small adobe buildings, and Flake connected these to make a home with a schoolroom upstairs. Today it houses a museum.

Next door to the museum is an elegant three-story house with a widow's walk on top, home of the late James M. Flake, eldest son of William. Many students boarded with the Flake family when they attended the Snowflake Academy, the only high school in the area for many years.

Draped over a chair is a friendship quilt made by Snowflake's women a few generations back. They embroidered their names onto quilt blocks, then assembled the blocks at a quilting party. The quilt was given for a special occasion like a birthday or a going-away gift. I find my grandmother's name on one quilt block and notice other names I remember from childhood.

In the Flake home, a heavy curtain closed off the parlor and the Christmas tree. Before going into the room to see their presents, the large family would finish their chores, eat breakfast, then line up by age, youngest first.

While a lively tune was played on the

piano, they would march into the parlor for Christmas. Any child who was caught peeking around the curtain ahead of time was last in line.

The Freeman house on Main Street is my favorite because my grandparents were married there in 1893, in the new home of John A. Freeman, my grandmother's brother and builder of the home. Today, a glass-doored cupboard holding beautiful dishes separates the kitchen from the formal dining room. The

kitchen with its big black wood stove and bakery cupboard feels warm and cheerful.

Eighty-year-old Beulah Stratton, a granddaughter of the home's original occupants, wears a long pioneer-style dress. She invites visitors to warm up by the fireplace and eat homemade cookies.

Another large brick home belonged to Jesse N. Smith, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who practiced polygamy before it became illegal and

had five wives and 44 children—not all of them living in his home at the same time, of course. Smith, a prominent local leader, educated himself; many of his books remain in his library. The home also holds much of the beautiful family furniture, and the kitchen is original.

One upstairs room remains unfinished, the rough outside brick forming the inside walls. When the Smith family showed it to visitors, they would say, "I'm sorry about this

[PREVIOUS PANEL, PAGES 44 AND 45] Powdery snow dusts tree limbs and meadows along a rural lane near Snowflake in eastern Arizona. **[OPPOSITE PAGE]** Decorated by Snowflake's volunteer fire department, the fire engine represents the town in area Christmas parades. **[ABOVE]** Like most of Snowflake's businesses and residences, the John A. Freeman Pioneer Home participates in the synchronized town lighting prompted by a signal from the mayor.





[LEFT] Using this loom in the “Sorry Room” of the Jesse N. Smith House, Emma Larson Smith taught neighborhood women how to make rag rugs from scraps of leftover fabric. [RIGHT] Forgotten until fire destroyed a surrounding structure, the tiny Locy Rogers cabin is open to the public. [BELOW] Built in 1890 and renovated by owners Dean and Sandra Porter, the Osmer D. Heritage Inn Bed and Breakfast and its tall pine tree get strung with lights with a boost from a power company’s lift ladder.

room, but we never got around to finishing it.” They eventually nicknamed it the “Sorry Room.” After Smith’s last wife, Emma, was widowed, she supported herself by weaving carpets on the loom in the Sorry Room.

The rustic Locy Rogers log cabin stands in contrast to the brick homes. Early settlers first lived in simple cabins, but were encouraged to turn them into nice homes as soon as they could. Over decades of adding and remodeling, the Rogers cabin was enclosed by a large two-story wooden home. Time passed and people forgot about the rustic little cabin until the outer home burned in 1989, revealing the sturdy structure inside, which had been protected by all the surrounding walls.

I spend the night in another beautifully restored home, the Osmer D. Heritage Inn Bed and Breakfast, elegantly decorated and furnished with antiques. The home, originally owned by Osmer D. Flake, has been in continuous use for more than a hundred years, and it isn’t hard to imagine the laughter and warmth of past celebrations. Today its 12 decorated bedrooms, each with a private bath, are vastly more luxurious than



during the pioneer period. I know that old Osmer D. never had it this good, and the spa tub in my bathroom is quite a contrast to the tin tub of Osmer D.’s day.

The next morning I’m treated to a delicious gourmet breakfast before I wander through the living room and into the parlor with its pale yellow walls, where I admire old pictures, books and especially the graceful mirrored cabinet.

Next door to the bed and breakfast, the old Flake brothers’ store is now Heritage Antiques. The carefully restored building also houses The Creamery, a turn-of-the-century soda fountain that serves ice cream along with soup and sandwiches. Upstairs, a large Victorian social hall is available for weddings, reunions and dances, just as it has been since the early 1900s.

This time of year, fog often freezes on trees, houses and fences. It has happened overnight, turning grass, homes and trees uniformly white and masking the lights on the temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in a hazy glow. When you can see your breath in the crisp air, it isn’t hard to get into the Christmas spirit.

Snowflake celebrates the rest of the Twelve Days of Christmas with activities that may include a performance of Handel’s *Messiah*, religious services at local churches, variety shows featuring Christmas

music, comedy routines and neighborhoods lined with luminarias.

Festivities culminate on the 12th night with a large bonfire at the rodeo grounds. Revelers drink steaming hot chocolate, visit around a large bonfire, then move to the rodeo grandstand. Lights dim and fireworks burst overhead

From the town lighting to the fireworks, there really is no place like home for the holidays, especially in a town named Snowflake. **AM**

Janet Webb Farnsworth was born, raised and still lives in Snowflake, and no matter where she travels, she’s always glad to come home.

Richard Webb of Mesa has many fond memories of Christmastime in Snowflake. He enjoyed rekindling some of those memories by visiting the pioneer homes and playing in the snow.



LOCATION: Approximately 170 miles northeast of Phoenix; 19 miles north of Show Low.

GETTING THERE: From Phoenix, drive northeast on State Route 87 to

Payson and turn right onto State Route 260. Drive east for about 50 miles, then turn left onto State Route 277, which heads northeast to Snowflake.

PHONE NUMBERS: Area code is 928.

RESTAURANTS: El Rancho, 536-4139; Enzo’s, 536-6174; Eva’s, 536-7683; Flake’s Steaks, 536-2205.

EVENTS: Twelve Days of Christmas, December 1-12.

ATTRACTIONS: Wagon rides and cookouts with Gary Kirkman, 536-7273; Stinson Museum and Historic Home Tours, 536-4881.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Osmer D. Heritage Inn Bed and Breakfast, 536-3322; Comfort Inn, 536-3888; Silver Creek Inn (3 miles south in Taylor) 536-2600.

TRAVEL ADVISORY: Be prepared for winter weather. Often there is snow on the roads to Snowflake in December.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Snowflake/Taylor Chamber of Commerce, 536-4331; www.snowflaketaylorchamber.com.

Holy Trinity MONASTERY Near St. David Offers PEACE and SOLITUDE to All Who Visit

A COUPLE, SEARCHING FOR WINDFALL PECANS, stopped rummaging through the splayed mahogany-brown husks to offer me a friendly hello. A peacock, intent on food, strutted by while a chilly breeze rattled the leaves that remained on a nearby cottonwood tree.

It was a sunny winter day at Holy Trinity, a Benedictine monastery on the west side of State Route 80, just south of St. David. Here, regardless of the season or one's spiritual condition, everyone is welcome.

It's easy to find the tiny community. A 70-foot Celtic cross in front spreads its arms high above the trees as if to say, "Welcome, one and all."

For the "one," like myself, in search of a respite from the hurly-burly, or for the "all," like a professional group in search of a retreat for contemplative down time, Holy Trinity beckons. The residing monks ask retreatants to practice the monastic traditions of "silence, solitude, simple living, community and personal prayer."

I treasured the silence and simplicity. By day I'd sit near the pond and write in the Japanese meditation garden, occasionally looking up to see brilliant orange and white koi swimming lazily just below the surface of the water. After dark I sat on the steps outside my room at Casa de Bernardo and closed my eyes. The air was so clean, so fresh. I breathed deeply as if to bank it, to later withdraw the memory on dusty days in Tucson. As I got up from the front stoop, a breeze skipped off the nearby San Pedro River and made more music with the leaves.

The sounds of silence permeated two out of three meals served in the monastery's dining room. Everyone dined in silence each night with Grand Silence reigning between the hours of Compline (night prayer) and the end of breakfast each day. At first I felt awkward because it seemed strange to be with others, yet hear nothing but the clinking and rattling of cutlery and glassware, or to catch someone's eye, smile and stay mute. Monastic tradition



also discourages the use of radios, telephones and TVs in or out of the 32 guest rooms, so I banished my cell phone to my car's glove compartment. None of the rooms had television or telephone, so tranquility prevailed.

Other than periodic silence, another lure to the 148-acre community was solitude. My quest was not only to write and read but also to revel in "be-ing." Well-placed benches along the Stations of the Cross, within the bird sanctuary, on the banks of Spirit Lake and in and outside Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, provided small sanctuaries, easily catering to my mood, the time of day and the weather.

The wooded path connecting the 14 Stations of the Cross began in the cemetery at the church's north side. At Station 7, I came to a clearing that offered a magnificent panorama of

high desert, big sky and the Whetstone Mountains to the west. Each station uses its immediate surroundings, such as a fallen tree, a mesquite fence or a prickly pear cactus, to inspire meditation and prayer.

As I walked the path along Spirit Lake, quietly quacking ducks hidden among the reeds rippled the water. The sunlight danced upon the water's surface, turning the shallows into a slick of diamondlike reflections. A parting in the vegetation revealed a small stone altar flanked by two enormous cottonwoods on the lake's north side. This is the place Father Henri, the community's prior, told me to look for. This beautiful setting "is where mass was celebrated before the church was built," he said.

Holy Trinity's landscape fosters a sense of peace and spiritual renewal. The idea of renewal

gave birth to the monastery. Benedictine establishments sprang up in the United States in the 1840s and, in 1974, Bishop Francis Green of the Tucson Diocese bid the creation of a Christian renewal center in Cochise County. Holy Trinity is an Olivetan Benedictine Community, its "mother house" being outside Siena, Italy, at Monte Oliveto Maggiore, according to guest coordinator Bill Lindley.

As Holy Trinity's brochure says, the community's hospitality extends to all, "whether guests come with faith in the one God that they worship in church, synagogue or mosque, or come as doubters or of no faith." This tradition closely follows the teachings of St. Benedict that all guests be received as Christ himself.

Although I am not Catholic, I wanted to experience a Mass in the tiny church, so I sat

[ABOVE] The monastery's grounds contain nearly 20 artesian springs, three of which supply water to the Japanese meditation garden's reflective pond, the vision of founder Father Louis Hasenfuss.

[ABOVE] A 70-foot stucco-and-steel Celtic cross designed by artist Millie Kaeser was presented in 1996 as a gift to Holy Trinity Monastery near St. David in southeastern Arizona.

several pews away from two other visitors making up the congregation at an afternoon service. The visitors must have been Catholic because they knew when to stand, when to kneel and when to sit but, before the service ended, they departed. I felt conspicuous enough being the remaining one of three, but as the one and only, I felt like Eve minus the fig leaf. So I left too, asking St. Benedict to please understand.

All Benedictine monasteries act as cultural centers for music and the arts. That's why I encountered an array of places to visit on the monastery grounds, including a museum housing the work of local professional artists. And there's a thrift store, too, where tubs of honey and beeswax lip balm sat on the counter by the cash register. I passed up the hand-me-down clothing, but I couldn't resist the offerings of the Holy Trinity hives.

Father Henri oversees the community and its ecumenical outreach programs. He said he is also available to meet with retreat groups who call upon him for spiritual direction or to perform the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession). Father Henri came to Holy Trinity in 1975 when he was 18. Father Louis Hasenfuss, who supervised the monastery's construction and operation from its inception in1974, "was a real mentor to me and showed me the way of Christ," said Father Henri. "There was love here." There still is. **AH**



[ABOVE] Father Henri Capdeville leads monastery visitors on a Stations-of-the-Cross walk, held weekly during Lent.



[ABOVE] A Mexican fountain graces the courtyard at the entrance to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. [LEFT] Outside the church, a statue depicting the Virgin Mary at age 14 overlooks a garden designed by Father Hasenfuss and Brother Benedict Lemeki in 1995.



LOCATION: Approximately 58 miles southeast of Tucson.
GETTING THERE: Drive east on Interstate 10. Take Exit 303 at Benson and drive 9 miles on State Route 80 to St. David. While passing through town, note St. David's schools on the north side of the highway. The Celtic cross marking the monastery's entrance is about 2.2 miles from the schools on the west side of the road.
FEES: Vary depending on single/double occupancy and groups and length of stay. Rates include meals and range from \$40 per night for an individual room to \$275 for a week in one of the hermitages. There are 16 hookups at Monte Cassino RV Park on the monastery property (meals not included); reservations are required.
EVENTS: A Christmas concert in early December and the Christmas Eve Mass draw many visitors, as do the two annual arts and crafts festivals on Mother's Day and on the second weekend in November.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: (520) 720-4016; www.holytrinitymonastery.org.

THINGS TO DO NEARBY

All area codes are 520.

AMERIND FOUNDATION The museum boasts one of the finest private collections devoted to the study of Southwest Indian cultures; Dagoon, 586-3666.

COCHISE STRONGHOLD Refuge of Cochise, leader of the Chiricahuas, during the Apache Wars and now

S T . D A V I D

part of Coronado National Forest. Huge boulder formations and interpretive and hiking trails; Coronado National Forest, Douglas Ranger District, 364-3468.

GAMMONS GULCH GHOST TOWN MOVIE SET An entirely authentic 1890s town and mining camp re-created like the Wild West, from the

working telegraph to the shingle mails to outhouses originally used by cowboys; Benson, 212-2831.

SAN PEDRO VALLEY ARTS AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM Once a grocery store, the art gallery and historical museum highlighting local cultures is on the National Register of Historic Places; Benson, 586-3070.

KARTCHNER CAVERNS STATE PARK About 3,500 feet of lighted pathways wind through this "living" cave; Benson, 586-CAVE.

TOMBSTONE "The Town Too Tough To Die" employed Wyatt Earp as sheriff and is home to the OK Corral, of shootout fame; Tombstone, (800) 457-3423.



"In the hospital, they give you three square meals. I'm going to use mine to retile the bathroom."*



"This is the last year we get a tumbleweed tree!"

DUST DEVILS

We asked readers for dust-devil jokes, and here is how they responded:

A boy was looking out the window and asked, "Ma, is it true what the pastor says, 'From dust we have come and to dust we will return'?"
"Yes," Ma replied.
"Well, you best come here and see, because somebody's coming or going."
DOUG WHITE, Caldwell, ID

Unusual Perspective

By Linda Perret

The Grand Canyon is one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. I've seen the Grand Canyon. It should actually be Numbers 3 through 6.

Question: Why is it that dust devils never stop at the same place they started?
Answer: They become short-winded.
FRED DEETER, Raunheim, Germany

Question: What did one dust devil say to another dust devil?
Answer: I'm just blowing through town.
SHELLI MERRELL, Hesperia, CA

The church I go to gets so many dust storms it's called "Our Lady of Perpetual Vacuuming."

what type gift you have in mind. If it's clothes, I wear small. If it's diamonds, I wear large."

WENDELL W. FENN, Tucson

FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONS

My daughter-in-law worked at the local hospital as a lab technician. One day her father was admitted to the hospital, and she was designated to go draw blood. Her father said, "I gave her all the education and schooling that she wanted, gave her a lovely wedding and now she wants blood."
BILL BATTERTON, Kimball, NE

TREEWHEELING

My friend totaled her car in an accident while driving down Interstate 10 between Phoenix and Tucson. Miraculously, she managed to pry herself from the wreckage without a scratch just when a state trooper arrived.
"My goodness!" the trooper gasped. "Your car looks like an accordion. How did this happen?"
"Well, officer," my friend chirped, "it was the strangest thing. I was

EARLY DAY ARIZONA

Thomas A. Edison, with all his inventions, was a piker compared to the ambitious young photographer who advertised: "Your baby, if you have one, can be enlarged, tinted and framed for \$8.79."

COCONINO SUN, DECEMBER 19, 1924

Question: Why are they called dust devils?
Answer: 'Cause an angel would never make that kind of mess.

BOTH BY TOM PADOVANO
Jackson Heights, NY

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

When I was getting ready to go shopping for a Christmas gift for my wife, I asked her to give me her sizes. She said, "It depends on

driving along when out from nowhere this tree pops up in front of me. So I swerved to the right, and there was another tree. And I swerved to the left, and there was still another tree. And I swerved to the right, and there was another tree, and . . ."

"Uh ma'am," the officer said, cutting her off, "there isn't a tree on this road for 70 miles. Are you sure that wasn't just the pine tree air freshener swinging back and forth from your rearview mirror?"

STEPHEN BLANCHETTE, Miami Beach, FL

SCOUT'S HONOR

I am a Girl Scout leader, and I had taken my Brownie troop on a field trip to Saguaro National Park, where we were working on earning our "Arizona Try-It" badge. The ranger was discussing with the girls the different types of wildlife found in the Sonoran Desert. He asked the question, "What do you call animals that are active during the night?"
One of my girls was quick to answer: "A night owl."

ANGEL BRYANT, Tucson

TO SUBMIT HUMOR

Send your jokes and humorous Arizona anecdotes to Humor, *Arizona Highways*, 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009 or e-mail us at editor@arizonahighways.com. We'll pay \$50 for each item used. Please include your name, address and telephone number with each submission.

Reader's Corner

Turquoise gets a bad rap. It's supposed to provide money, love, protection and healing. All diamonds can do is cut glass.

This month's topic is **gemstones**. Send us your jokes, and we'll pay you \$50 for each one we use.

BRITTLEBUSH TRAIL

Presents SURREAL SECLUSION in the Desert Near Phoenix

[BELOW] Lichen-covered boulders, saguaro cacti, paloverde trees and brittlebushes glow golden as a day draws to a close in the Sonoran Desert National Monument south of Phoenix. [OPPOSITE PAGE] Along the Brittlebush Trail, boulders and brittlebushes cover the hills rising from the saguaro-studded desert floor.



KEVIN KUBSEY

RIISING LESS THAN 100 FEET per mile, the Brittlebush Trail might feel more like a desert stroll than a hike. But the land traversed is not ordinary desert. Located in the Sonoran Desert National Monument, the trail enters a surrealistic-looking terrain—pristine, untrammelled and extraordinarily remote for its close proximity to Phoenix.

Hikers on this trail might find themselves and the lizards all alone during their 6-mile walk to the Margie's Cove Trail.

The trail crosses a Sonoran Desert landscape where creosote bushes and cholla cacti feel at home, and saguaro forests cover low-rising mountain slopes. Not a manicured track, the trail heads into the center of the North Maricopa Mountains Wilderness within the monument along portions of old roads and desert washes. Cairns and occasional signposts remind hikers to pay attention and stay on the indistinct route.

The Brittlebush starts on a desert flat, also called a creosote flat because of its vegetative preponderance of creosote bushes, and heads north toward a jumble of ridgelines that juts from the desert floor. Just past mile 2, the route transitions from old roadway into a

wide wash between low-rising ridgelines. A saguaro cactus forest covers the sun-facing slopes, loosely at first. As the path heads deeper into the wilderness, the spread of saguaros thickens.

Distinctive weathered boulders cover all the surrounding mountains. The rocky slopes make perfect hangouts for brittlebush plants. After a wet winter, around late February and early March, the hillsides take on a golden glow from the brittlebushes' daisylike flowers. This springtime event inspired the trail's name.

While it treads the wash, the trek has a wild and remote feel punctuated by some peculiar features. Room-sized boulders cluster along the banks. Jumping bean shrubs, sometimes called the Arizona jumping bean and kin to the bushes that produce Mexican jumping beans, display red-tinged leaves. Ironwood trees big enough to produce shade grow along the banks. Here the desert feels almost too silent to be real.

Civilization drops in at about mile 4.5 in the form of a signpost signaling the route's separation from the wash as it takes up on a remnant of road. The vegetation turns prickly again with cacti. The last mile of trail follows the faded roadway through a series of oxbowlike twists across the desert floor to its end at the edge of an east-west wash near the midsection of the Margie's Cove Trail.

Nothing identifies the Brittlebush Trail's end, nor do any signs announce the Margie's Cove Trail. It's an unmarked spot in a silent space. **AH**



LOCATION: Approximately 65 miles south of Phoenix.

GETTING THERE: From Phoenix, drive south on Interstate 10 to the Maricopa Road exit. Drive south on Maricopa Road (State Route 347) to the town of Maricopa, and turn right (west) onto State Route 238. Drive 31.4 miles to an unmarked primitive road, and turn right; drive 3.2 miles and veer right; drive 2.0 miles and veer right again; drive 0.8 miles to the trailhead. A high-clearance vehicle is required.

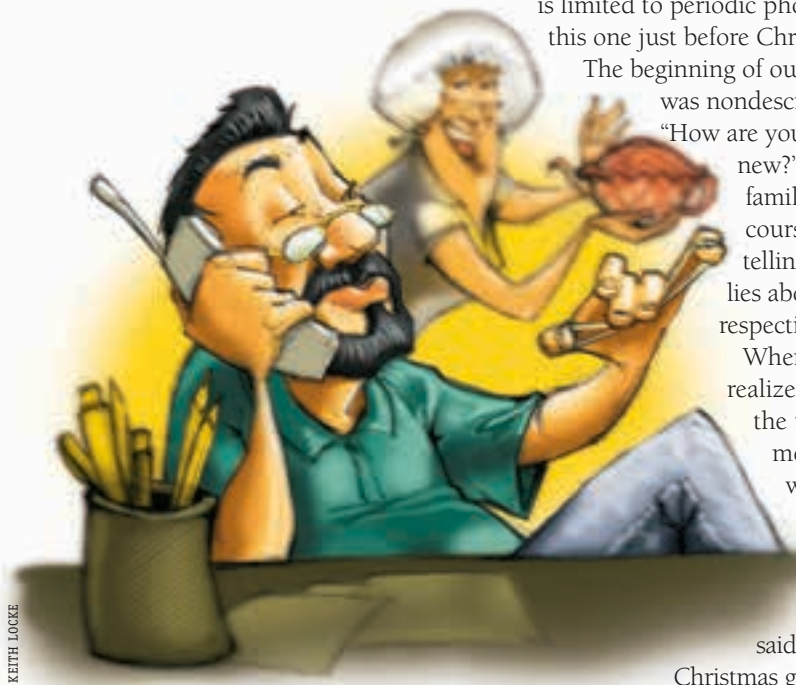
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix Field Office, (623) 580-5500; www.az.blm.gov/pfo/bbush1.htm.



Before you go on this hike, visit our Web site at arizonahighways.com for other things to do and places to see in the area.



There's Just No Telling Who Sent What to Whom for Christmas



KEITH LOCKE

CHRISTMAS IS THAT TIME OF YEAR WHEN WE find out how useless certain toys are when batteries are not included. I recently discovered that it's also a time when my brother and I find out how useless we are whether batteries are included or not — at least, when it comes to exchanging gifts.

We live almost a continent apart, and neither of us writes many letters, so our communication is limited to periodic phone calls — like this one just before Christmas.

The beginning of our conversation was nondescript — the usual “How are you?” “What’s new?” “How’s the family?” Then, of course, we started telling unbelievable lies about our respective golf games. When my wife realized who was on the telephone, she mouthed to me the words, “Thank him for the Christmas present.” I nodded and said, “We got your Christmas gift. Thanks a lot.”

He asked, “What did we send you?” Apparently, his wife does the shopping for their family.

I said, “I have no idea.” Obviously, my spouse opens the Christmas gifts for our family.

He asked, “You don’t know what you got?” I asked, “You don’t know what you sent?”

My wife was sensing that the “thank you” was going awry. She frantically searched for a pencil and jotted on a scratch pad the words, “Tea cozy.”

I shrugged my shoulders in the gesture that’s understood universally to mean, “What does that mean?”

Again, she mouthed, “That’s the gift they sent us.” Then she added to the scratch pad the words, “A beautiful.”

Ah. I understood. I said to my brother, “You sent us a tea cozy.”

He said, “Oh, that’s right.”

I said, “It’s beautiful.”

He said, “I’m glad you like it. What’s a tea cozy?”

I said, “I have no idea.” He asked, “What do

you do with one of those things?”

I said, “Beats me. But we love it and it’s beautiful.”

My wife just flapped her hands at me and the telephone in the gesture that’s universally understood to mean, “I don’t want anything more to do with you or your brother.”

But then she changed her mind. She mouthed more words to me. “Ask if they got our gift.”

“Did you get the gift we sent?” I asked.

He said, “I have no idea. Did you send us a gift this year?”

I said indignantly, “Of course. We send you a gift every year.” Then I looked at my wife and signaled her with the gesture that’s understood universally to mean, “We do send them a gift every year, don’t we?”

She nodded her head up and down, a gesture that’s understood universally to mean, “Yes.”

I was relieved.

Then, knowing that I didn’t know what we sent, she jotted our gift down on the scratch paper and left.

My brother said, “Oh, yeah . . . we got your gift. Thanks.” That didn’t fool me, though. I used deductive reasoning. I knew that he didn’t know what he sent us. I also knew that he knew that I didn’t know what he sent us. I knew that he didn’t know what we sent him, but I knew that he knew that I probably didn’t know what we sent him. But thanks to my wife’s prompting, I did know. Based on that simple logic, I realized I had the advantage. So I exploited it.

“Did you like it?” I asked.

He said, “Uh, oh yeah, we loved it.” I knew he was faking it.

“Where did you hang it?” I asked.

“Oh . . . in the den,” he said.

“How’s it look there?”

“Great,” he said. His voice had more confidence because he thought he was successfully pulling off this deceit.

“That’s terrific,” I said. “I’ll be anxious to see it the next time I visit.”

We said our goodbyes and hung up.

When I joined my wife in the living room, she asked, “So how’s everyone doing back there?”

“They’re doing fine,” I said. “I’m eager to get back to see them.”

“Why?” she asked.

I said, “I just can’t wait to see that almond covered cheese ball hanging in their den.” **AM**



Photograph by Jack Dykinga

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